

A Legacy of Economic Development

Nuts and Bolts of Brownfield
Redevelopment for Local Governments

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Focus/Orientation of Course

- Focus on smaller communities and rural areas with similar issues to urban areas
- Characterizing/assembling parcels
- Cleaning up properties
- Using public and private funds to attract redevelopment

Did you know this about rural America?

- 83% of land in U.S.
- 70% of land privately owned and managed by 4.7 million individuals
- Less than 8% of rural residents are directly involved in agriculture
- 84% of farm household income is from off-farm sources (mostly wages/salaries)

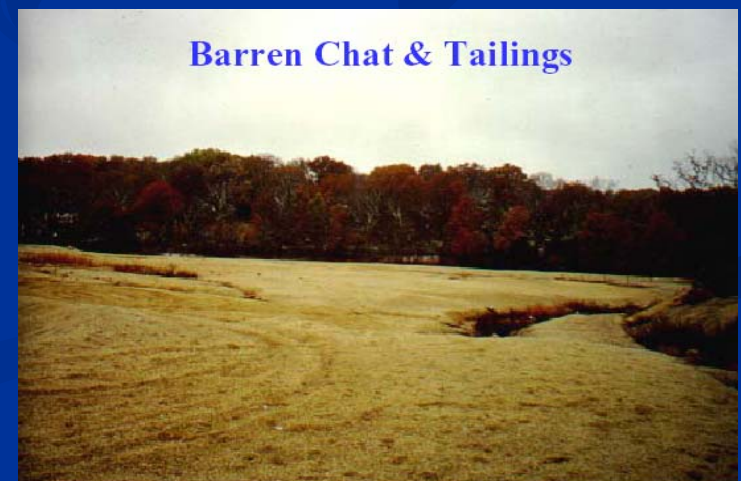
Source: NADO Research Foundation (USDA data)

What are Rural Brownfields?

- Mine scarred lands
- Abandoned gas stations
- Abandoned or underutilized mills
- Charcoal or forest product facilities
- Extractive industry facilities in often remote areas
- Hospitals and main street buildings with older hazardous building materials

What are Rural Brownfields? (continued)

- Mine scarred lands



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What are Rural Brownfields? (continued)

- Abandoned gas stations



What are Rural Brownfields? (continued)

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How did the Rural Brownfields Legacy unfold?

Two primary drivers:

1. The rise, fall, and shifts of the extractive industries
2. The rise, fall, and shifts of the agricultural sector and society

Extractive Industries

- Remote rural areas
(Region 7 activities from 1700 to present)
- Mining processes and legacies
- Timber/forest products cycles and legacies



Agricultural Sector Legacy

- Region 7 factors and shifts in land use
- Cultural shifts and changes over time



- Farm panics, crises, and depression
- Farm crisis of 70s and its modern legacy

Agricultural Sector Legacy (continued)

- Major issues
- Decline in family farms and good pay in rural/agricultural areas



Agricultural Sector Legacy (continued)

- Population shift to urban areas
- Biggest problem in most Region 7 rural and small communities - “brain drain” and youth



Rural and Small Communities: A Legacy of History and Neglect

- Traditional notions of brownfields redevelopment discussions grounded in urban context
- Traditional brownfields professionals reside and operate from urban areas
- Urban sites traditionally have more drivers to fix problems versus small and rural sites

Why is this important?

- Rural and small communities face a continuing myriad of challenges to effective redevelopment
 - Context is everything (urban realities, location of professionals)
 - Cultural context (lenders, realtors, public)
 - Financial context
 - Policy context (small entity or regional one)

How we deal with understanding the context of small and rural sites

- MEANINGFUL community involvement
- Go beyond the Phase 1 research if you can
- Understand the community's visions of the future, not your own contextual reality
- The art of balance
- Empathy, not sympathy

The Dearth of Information

- NADO and its work from 1999 to 2004
- NADO publications
- Major findings worth noting from research
 - What is “small” or what is “rural”
 - Dearth of attention or funding to the larger issue

NADO Publications

- Reclaiming Rural America's Brownfields: Alternatives to Abandoned Property, April 2001
- Six Common Threads: Weaving Successful Brownfields Projects into Rural and Small Communities, December 2003
- Brownfields Resource Guide for Rural and Small Communities, 2004
- Incorporating Brownfields Revitalization Projects into Regional Comprehensive Economic Planning, October 2004

Experiences in the Fields and Forests of Region 7 and Beyond

- Hope versus reality
- A culture of pride, a culture of despair
- Continuity- great... but not so fast
- The role of “context” for urban practitioners eager to help
- One size, one culture does not fit all (amazing differences in each region of each state)

Experiences in the Fields and Forests of Region 7 and Beyond

(continued)

- Long term continuity of:
 - Staff (especially local)
 - Funding
 - Programs (local or regional)
- In touch with the community?
- In touch with reality?

Experiences in the Fields and Forests of Region 7 and Beyond

(continued)

- Who are the players?
 - The local champions
 - The governing authorities
 - Local lenders and realtors
 - Chambers, IDAs, similar business groups
 - “Build it and they will come”- illustration of dilemma

Tips for the Road

- Quit assuming. You already will miss issues at a rural site, so don't make it worse.
- Listen to the layers of the community. For real.
- Know that politics are always bigger than the science.
- Celebrate even the smallest of successes.
- Measure progress in decades, not years.

""""""""""Good luck this week!

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